



GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

March 2015 VOLUME 6 ISSUE 3

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Homelessness Snapshot: is the picture accurate, and how will it look next year?



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

The 2015 Point in Time (PIT) count attempted to discover how many people in Washtenaw County were homeless on a given winter night – Tuesday the 27th in this case – and of them how many were veterans and/or chronically homeless. A Groundcover News office staff volunteer, Glenn Gates, was among those interviewing people on the 28th, collecting information that could be used to address their needs.

Gates was somewhat perturbed that so many of his fellow survey-takers worked for agencies that received County money whose funding might be impacted by the results of the surveys.

He was first sent to “the breakfast church” – St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Ann Arbor, where many in the homeless community start every day. He already knew the people he interviewed there and was uncomfortable with the personal nature of some of the questions he had to ask people who had been unsheltered the night before.

At his second assignment, the daytime warming shelter hosted by St. Mary’s Student Chapel in Ann Arbor, he deliberately approached people he did not know.

“The people I spoke to were more than willing to answer questions. Some [questions] were really, really personal and some declined to answer those, which was fine. I was surprised at how many revealed some mental illness,” said Gates.

These questions – about people’s sexual activity and the use of protection, and their drug use, including where and when they last used – were done alongside the PIT Count but were part of a tool that will be used to assess housing and service needs. As part of the national Zero:16 Campaign, Washtenaw

County set goals to house all veterans by the end of 2015 and all of those who have had multiple or extended bouts of homelessness by the end of 2016. The survey will help determine which individuals will be best served by rapid re-housing, affordable housing or permanent supportive housing, and to prioritize placement of the most vulnerable people first.

Another survey volunteer, Greg Pratt, felt that the request to take the pictures of those who answered the housing assessment questions prompted others to disappear before they could be asked any questions at all. He contended that the lower count numbers for this year, as compared to the last count which was done in 2013, could well have resulted from the changes in methodology and definitions. Two separate surveys comprised this year’s interviews; they ended with the request for a photo to accompany survey testimonials and did not count people who were couch-surfing or staying the night in motel rooms paid for privately.

Some unhoused people who sell Groundcover reported that they and

others refused to speak with the survey volunteer who approached them – so, presumably, they were not included in the count. They refused because, in their experience, people collect a lot of information but do nothing to help them.

The 2015 count found 387 homeless individuals, 80 of whom were “unsheltered” – defined as on the streets or in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars or abandoned buildings – while the remainder were in shelters or transitional housing. The 2013 PIT count found 510 people who were unhoused, 166 of whom were unsheltered.

A breakdown of the 2015 count showed that the sheltered group included 23 adults with 52 children, comprising 20 families; 229 individual adults; and three unaccompanied youth. Of this sheltered group, 24 are veterans, 37 are experiencing chronic homelessness, 53 indicated severe mental illness, 23 reported chronic substance use, and 21 reported domestic violence.

see SNAPSHOT, page 6

GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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Is it torture?

by Luna Lemus-Bromley
U-M Student Contributor

Juan Mendez, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment was in Ann Arbor on Friday, January 23 to present a lecture on international law and torture.

Mendez spoke about “cruel and degrading treatment,” a term used to describe treatment that, though horrible, is not classified as torture. One aspect that can distinguish torture from “cruel and degrading treatment,” as explained by Darius Rejali in his book *Torture and Democracy*, is that the torturer usually has an objective for exercising torture, such as obtaining information.

The many definitions for torture are neither the same nor exact. Determining a clear distinction between torture and “cruel and degrading treatment” proves to be a widely-observed challenge, even in legal systems.

The way words are used today shows a diminishing sensitivity to this language on behalf of the average person. For example, someone stuck in traffic on a main road in suburbia might say, “This is torture.” Regardless of whether or not they are being serious, they are most likely not experiencing anything near

“cruel and degrading treatment,” never mind torture.

We are all exposed to different challenges; maybe being stuck in traffic does feel like torture to some. Those who have not undergone certain severe experiences might, however, be naïve regarding what torture can actually amount to. If individuals are using the same term to label traffic jams and extreme physical abuse, what is being said about our society’s recognition of those who are suffering the most? Is it truly a lack of understanding that causes this insensitivity? Or is it a lack of consideration?

Trivial usage of words like “torture” is problematic because it dilutes them. The more actions we categorize as torture, the less exact its definition is – and we distance ourselves from actual abuse. We become negligent of the reality of torture and fail to curtail it.

Aura Rosser, R.I.P.

Dear Editor,

The failure of the Ann Arbor Police Department to only use non-lethal force against Aura Rosser is a true disgrace on our community, with no guarantee that it will not happen again!

Paul Lambert

What time is it?



by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell
Groundcover Contributor

What time is it? It's a question we usually pose regarding the chronological flow of time. Perhaps we're worried about a fast-approaching deadline we might miss. Or maybe we can't remember if we've turned our clocks appropriately forward or backward for daylight savings. Many of us know the experience of traveling, crossing too many time zones, and being genuinely confused about the current hour. What time is it? Who hasn't asked that question when awakening from a nap that leaves you very time-disoriented?

There's another way to ask this time question. That way is not about the particular hour of the day, but rather about the quality of the time.

We know... and we are them

by James Hutson
Intern, Family Life Ministries
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
of Ann Arbor

It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know....

John 4:42

The old saying, "Don't judge me until you've walked a mile in my shoes," provides powerful advice. We live diverse lives in a diverse world, and have the human insanity of intelligence to color our perspectives of the "who, what, when and where" of what we know, do and say. Insanity, I say, because we tend to think that we know what the other people in our lives are thinking, even though we're not telepathic or "inside that person's head." We tend to interpret what the other person means when they are saying something – as they are saying it – instead of asking for clarification or elaboration of what is meant by their words.

So it is with those with whom we "collide" in this journey throughout the daily minutiae of living. I call it a collision because we often respond with a knee-jerk reaction rather than a vested interest in those with whom we share this community, this city and this life – whether homeless or not, employed or not, or even "like-us" or not. We don't embrace strangers, engage those in our path or entertain differences in the daily grind of life.

What time is it? There are two words for time in Greek, *chronos* and *kairos*. Chronos is the time of deadlines, of clocks springing forward or falling backwards, and of a world carefully ordered with twenty-four time zones. By contrast, *kairos* is a word signifying the ripening of time, the opportune moment, time full of choice, meaning, and holy nudges. I came face-to-face with *kairos* late last September.

I was traveling with my older daughter then. I joined her in Europe one week after she arrived there. We both got tangled up in the frustrating Air France pilots' strike. When I finally met her in Venice, I was in a *chronos* time knot, very tired and very hungry. The next morning I awoke early in that city with its many canals and set out to take a walk. I was bound and determined not to get lost. Everyone has a story about getting lost in Venice. I kept my eyes on my feet at first. The paving surface beneath them was uneven and continually changing, and every few steps there was yet another bridge to cross.

So, am I suggesting that we go and participate in being "homeless" so that we can better appreciate the homeless? Or go to a community where your theological, political, or financial status and views are the minority or disdained? Nope.

Let us merely open our eyes – a simple act that we don't do enough.

The issues of this world, the chronic problems that seem to lurk outside our comfort zones and fortified walls of self, are in front of us each and every day. Nothing is assured from one moment to the next but the faith that sustains me.

So it is with the social and moral issues of the world we live in: homelessness, homosexual rights, social welfare, social justice, racial tensions and a host of other issues that cause dissension and discord even among well-meaning and compassionate people. We travel to and from the various destinations in our life and don't look – don't truly see what lies in between them. We don't want to see, because to see threatens our self-image of being understanding, compassionate and loving. It is ourselves and our views that we are protecting.

We don't call them "homeless," but rather "displaced persons." We don't say "homosexual" but instead "gay" – a term from the past that meant happy. We don't say "food stamps" for the government subsidy, but instead "SNAP" or "bridge card."

When I finally lifted my head all the way, I found myself staring at a tidy red boat on the other side of a canal. Neatly lettered on its bow was the name *Kairos*. I smiled with gratitude, for the best vacation times provide *kairos* pauses in our *chronos*-laden lives. I smiled too because the water supporting that moored *kairos* vessel richly reflected the colors of the *chronos* world around it. We need both *chronos* and *kairos*. Their balance is ideal.

Frigid temperatures accompanied by high winds are common in the winter on the prairie where I live. That winter combination drives my daily walk inside. I can frequently be seen during a favorite NPR program completing laps of various shapes through my house. At first I kept track of my 45-minute walk with my phone in hand. Several weeks ago, I switched to timekeeping with my 15-minute hourglass, the one that sits on my writing desk before a beautiful view of prairie expanse just outside the window.

My cat, Sophie, loves to sit atop the

collected projects on my desk. With typical feline alertness, she discovered the sand flowing through the hourglass one of the first days I used it to mark the passage of my walking time. She watched me turn it over twice more in the course of my walk. I have several great pictures of her perched on my desk, intent on the sand's movement. In a still, almost meditative and wide-eyed pose, she seems the picture of *kairos* beholding the quick race of *chronos* time.

For me, the Venice boat and Sophie with the hourglass keep *chronos* and *kairos* in good company with one another. We are fast approaching the spring equinox. In its balance, we can honor all the necessary twists and turns of *chronos* with the wise direction of *kairos*. Graced by images of a boat and a cat, I hear the question, "What time is it?" as a reminder of the essential companioning of *chronos* and *kairos*.

So, what time is it?

But if we open our eyes, we see the humanity before us and have to make a choice between our agenda or a greater, more compelling agenda. We have to see people as human beings worthy of dignity and acceptance – that homeless person, that homosexual, and even that poor family that is in front of us at the grocery store buying what seems like less-than-nutritious food with the food stamps.

We face ourselves in the eyes of someone else, and we fear the person we will see.

I've had an opportunity to experience homelessness, but I haven't experienced homelessness for several years or the majority of my life. I'm secure in the fact and identification of my gender and my sexuality. I have never had to wrestle with gender confusion or look at common issues from the perspective

of those outside the commonly accepted norms.

No matter how difficult or inconvenient it may be for me, however, I am washing the dirt from my own eyes and endeavoring to see the homeless person in my path, to understand their needs from a clear perspective, and to learn more so I can effectively help meet their needs, individually and socially. I can see the debate swirling around same-sex marriage and retain my own opinions about it, while being compassionate to the struggle of those who think differently. I can respect the decisions of the wealthy and understand the difficult decisions of the poor.

I can open my eyes and stop believing what I *think* I know, what has been fed

see WE KNOW, page 9



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Catholic Social Services serves all needs of clients, from counseling to food

by Sue Budin
Groundcover Contributor

The man had lived on the streets for many years. In his seventies, his health was not good. Because of some behavioral problems, he was not allowed to return to the Delonis Center, where he had previously sought and received shelter. But with the assistance of a case manager, he was able to move into housing, and for the first time in years, had a friend with common interests who visited him regularly. His life has been significantly changed by the concerted efforts of Catholic Social Services (CSS) and collaborating agencies.

To find out about other services offered by CSS, I met with David Garvin, its Chief Operating Officer, who has been at the agency since 1987, beginning as a therapist working directly with clients. He has seen the growth of the agency that began in 1959 in a house on Division Street and an office in Ypsilanti. Today, CSS has a spacious building located between the two cities and on a bus route, making services available to a broad range of clients. They also use other buildings in the community for various programs.

At first, CSS services were limited to pregnancy and other counseling, adoption and emergency programs. They had a small staff and some social work interns. Currently, they employ 25 therapists and two part-time psychiatrists, and average 700 visits a month. Because of managed health care and the



David Garvin is the acting Operating Officer at Catholic Social Services.

Affordable Care Act, only five percent of their clients pay out-of-pocket and the rest have some insurance coverage. CSS charges clients based on a sliding scale, so that no one is turned away because of inability to pay.

Their mental health services provide counseling and ongoing support to individuals who may be victims of child abuse, are recovering from addiction, or are suffering from depression and anxiety. They also counsel the perpetra-

tors of abuse – an example of the breadth of their services and empathy for all those affected by hardship. Their substance abuse groups focus on goal-setting toward a healthier lifestyle.

Services for families include a four-to six-week intervention program in the home for families affected by child abuse or neglect. Social workers are

available at all hours to talk with clients and give material assistance. This dual approach has been successful in averting future abuse and building stability in the family. Their Family Time program provides a safe, supervised place for non-custodial parents to meet with their children. Grandparents as Parents (GAP) serves grandparents who are raising their grandchildren and offers support groups, educational workshops and activities. Healthy Families is an in-home program that educates parents of children aged five and under

Their pregnancy and adoption services place infants for domestic adoption with prospective parents who undergo extensive counseling and preparation. Post-adoption services provide ongoing support groups. Father Patrick Jackson House provides a safe home for pregnant teens, and teaches them skills necessary to be good parents. Counseling is also provided to those for whom parenting is not the chosen option, and gives both birth and adoptive parents the opportunity to have an open adoption.

CSS also offers many needed services for seniors in our community. These include an adult day care program, respite volunteers who give a needed break to caregivers, assistance in signing up for Medicare and Medicaid, and filing tax returns. Their Neighborhood Senior Services

program provides advocacy, referrals, and practical help for those living in their homes, from house repairs to transportation and companion services. For seniors wanting to volunteer, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) matches their interests and skills to local non-profits.

As part of the CSS vision to serve all needs of clients, emergency food assistance is essential. Regular distribution of both non-perishable and perishable food occurs at Northside Community Center, located at 809 Taylor Street in Ann Arbor. CSS funds the location and the service is provided by the Community Action Network, with food donated by Food Gatherers. This is just one example of how CSS networks with other agencies to streamline efforts to help the needy. They also work with Avalon Housing and the Washtenaw Housing Alliance to provide housing to extremely low-income residents, while providing case management for those clients who may still be suffering from mental illness, substance abuse, or other crises that limit their ability to function.

One of the programs Mr. Garvin is proud of (among many) is Intentional Communities of Washtenaw, which is a group started by parents of disabled adult children. Parents and staff are committed to finding sustainable housing for these individuals where they can be productive, engaged participants in their work and daily living.

I have not even touched on their other collaborations, such as the Washtenaw Prisoner Reentry program, but the scope and depth of CSS's services and mission is obvious. When asked to describe the philosophy of CSS, Mr. Garvin replied, "We take care of people who oftentimes the community doesn't want to see." And they are always treated with respect and compassion.

To contact CSS, visit their website, www.csswashtenaw.org, or call them at 734-971-9781.

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2014 – a great year in filmmaking

by Andrew Nixon
Associate Editor

2014 was a special year in the annals of cinema; rarely has there been a year so abundant with outstanding films. That many of these have gone under-represented in this season's big awards ceremonies, though, is no surprise. Last month, Metacritic.com, a film review aggregator, compared average film scores with Oscar wins over the last 20 years and found surprising gaps. For example, 50 percent of the best-rated films didn't even get nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards. This year's Oscars ceremony proved the rule, with Richard Linklater's groundbreaking film, *Boyhood*, being the best-reviewed film of 2014 but failing to win Best Picture.

Film is art, and art evokes passionate responses in people – a virtual guarantee that there will never be perfect consensus on a film's merit, and that people will always relish disagreeing about the best films of the year. That said, here's my list of the Top 30 English-language movies of 2014, plus reviews for several that (in my passionate opinion!) didn't garner the attention they deserved.

Five great films from 2014 you probably didn't see

Under the Skin (Directed by Jonathan Glazer)

This is truly one of the most visionary and haunting films ever made. It would be difficult to give away too much about this art-house masterpiece, because you

probably won't fully understand what's happening at any particular given point – even after multiple viewings (which this film deserves). Suffice it to say that Scarlett Johansson puts a mesmerizingly twisted twist on her usual seductress act; after you see this film, I guarantee that you will be terrorized by the sight of her evermore. The stranger-than-Eraserhead story stands on its own; but in the masterful hands of director and co-writer Jonathan Glazer (keep an eye out for him!), the imagery really, well, gets *under your skin*. The musical score, too, will stick with you forever – not since Kubrick, whose use of established atonal works by Ligeti and others lent an unforgettable eerie quality to films such as *2001* (the obelisk scene) and *The Shining* (the blood rushing out of the elevator), has a soundtrack achieved such terrifying creepiness.

Noah (Directed by Darren Aronofsky)

Inimitable director Darren Aronofsky has once again outdone himself, creating a visionary masterpiece whose every moment bristles with spiritual electricity; a sense of the *mysterium tremendum* – the tremendous and yet terrible mystery – of a nascent Creation still in intimate contact with its mighty Maker. This is not a film to be judged by standards of mere perfection; its vision and power lie quite beyond the pretty and careful craftsmanship of more conventional films like *The Imitation Game*. Such films may be perfect in formal terms but do not achieve the profound. Noah does. Aronofsky paints a fresh canvas with iconic imagery (consider unforgettable the Creation, Eden and Cain-Abel sequences pref-

acing the story), startlingly original special effects, and deeply devout performances from Russell Crowe as the reluctant chosen one, Noah, Jennifer Connelly as his steadfastly pious wife, and Anthony Hopkins as the sagely Methuselah, transforming an unlikely Biblical tale into a truly conversionary religious experience. The dearth of critical attention this masterwork, Aronofsky's greatest triumph thus far, has received is simply despicable. *Noah* is a cinematic triumph of the highest order, and easily one of the best films of 2014.

Whiplash (Directed by Damien Chazelle)

Directing rookie Damien Chazelle (who also wrote the screenplay) here has created a masterpiece that totally embodies both the frenetic spirit of jazz and the maddening pressure of trying to make it big in the extremely competitive jazz scene. The terseness of the storytelling astonishes; there is neither a shot nor a word that is inessential. The relentless buildup of psychological tension throughout, augmented brilliantly by J.K. Simmons as the ruthlessly brilliant conservatory conductor, and unerringly wound-up by the inspired visual and sound editing, becomes almost unbearable to witness. This is a virtuosic thrill ride that plunges us into the increasingly-strained mind of the protagonist and makes us feel, and endure, the aspiring young drummer's

tortuous journey to greatness.

The Babadook (Directed by Jennifer Kent)

This is one of the greatest (indeed, one of the few great) horror films ever made, full stop. Guillermo del Toro's richly conceived 2006 film, *Pan's Labyrinth*, comes to mind; from fascinating premise, to unforgettable monster, to beautiful visual craftsmanship and haunting visual and sonic effects, to intelligent writing and impeccable performances from the entire cast, *The Babadook* is very much that film's equal. Essie Davis, playing the bereaved and beset mother, is simply legendary. Apart from its obvious horror slant, though, this is a deeply touching drama about a very profound idea: that only by making peace with – indeed loving – one's inner demons, may we ourselves find peace.

Locke (Directed by Steven Knight)

The simplest premise – an ordinary man who watches his entire life unravel in 90 minutes – and the simplest possible means of conveying it – a handful of cameras, a car, and one actor, all captured in real-time – here are used to greatest possible advantage, creating one of the most thoroughly emotionally gripping films of the year. If there was any doubt before that Tom Hardy is one of the world's finest actors, there shouldn't be anymore.

Andrew's Top 30 English-Language Films of 2014

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Nymphomaniac</i> | 16. <i>Foxcatcher</i> |
| 2. <i>Boyhood</i> | 17. <i>Nightcrawler</i> |
| 3. <i>Under the Skin</i> | 18. <i>A Most Dangerous Man</i> |
| 4. <i>Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)</i> | 19. <i>Locke</i> |
| 5. <i>Noah</i> | 20. <i>Mr. Turner</i> |
| 6. <i>The Imitation Game</i> | 21. <i>Gone Girl</i> |
| 7. <i>Selma</i> | 22. <i>The Immigrant</i> |
| 8. <i>Exodus: Gods and Kings</i> | 23. <i>The Drop</i> |
| 9. <i>Whiplash</i> | 24. <i>X-Men: Days of Future Past</i> |
| 10. <i>A Most Violent Year</i> | 25. <i>Edge of Tomorrow</i> |
| 11. <i>The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies</i> | 26. <i>Captain America: The Winter Soldier</i> |
| 12. <i>The Babadook</i> | 27. <i>The Rover</i> |
| 13. <i>Inherent Vice</i> | 28. <i>The Signal</i> |
| 14. <i>The Theory of Everything</i> | 29. <i>Interstellar</i> |
| 15. <i>The LEGO Movie</i> | 30. <i>The Judge</i> |



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Homelessness Snapshot: is the picture accurate, and how will it look next year?

continued from page 2

The unsheltered group consisted of 80 individuals, and no families or youth – likely due to the tendency of friends and relatives to provide temporary shelter to them when it is very cold. Of the unsheltered individuals, five are veterans, 34 are experiencing chronic homelessness, 41 indicated severe mental illness, 21 reported chronic substance abuse, and 13 reported experiencing domestic violence.

Of the 334 people who completed in-depth surveys, 224 were classified as vulnerable. Being violently attacked since becoming homeless was reported by 20 percent, and 25 percent reported being homeless for more than two years.

Of the 387 total people unhoused that night, 243 reported mental disorders, 164 reported chronic health conditions, and 176 reported substance use issues. Eighty-eight of these people reported they had all three of these conditions.

The 71 chronically homeless people accounted for 256 visits to the emergency room and 89 hospitalizations in the last six months, (this is one of the reasons why housing and stabilizing people saves the community money.) The Fre-

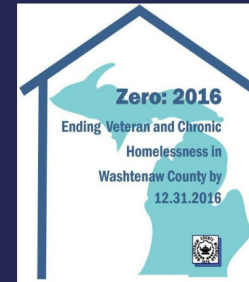
quent User Systems Engagement (FUSE) program grant allowed 52 medically vulnerable people in Washtenaw County to be housed this year, which certainly played a role in reducing the number of homeless people found in the latest survey. However, placement of those people reduced the number of units available for other chronically homeless people whose histories prevent them from renting on the open market – even if their rent is subsidized.

The shortage of property owners willing to rent to vulnerable people is the largest obstacle to ending chronic homelessness. The good news is that, once the renovations at the Ann Arbor Housing Commission units are complete, there will be 38-54 additional units of public housing in Ann Arbor and 60 unoccupied units at Miller Manor that will be ready for new residents. Aubrey Patino, who oversees support services for Avalon Housing, stated that 60 chronically homeless people will receive housing this spring as the Miller Manor restoration is completed. All will receive support services, 15 from the Veterans Administration, four from Ozone House, and the rest from Avalon.

The Ypsilanti Housing Commission is replacing or renovating 198 units, 112 of them this spring, and expanding the family empowerment program that piloted at Hamilton Crossing and resulted in very low turnover.

If the community develops affordable housing at the two Platt Road sites – the City site south of Packard and the County site between Washtenaw and Huron Parkway – it appears we really could end long-term homelessness. We need to let our elected officials know that this matters to us.

WASHTENAW COUNTY 2015 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT



January 28, 2015

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE PIT COUNT?

Unsheltered

■ Persons with a primary nighttime residence that is a place not designed for human habitation:

- Car
- Park
- Abandoned building
- Bus or train station
- Airport
- Camping Ground

Sheltered

■ Persons who are living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements:

- Shelters
- Transitional Housing
- Hotel or Motels paid for by charitable organizations, state, federal, or local government funders

PIT COUNT DATA SUMMARY: TOTAL PERSONS

387 people experienced homelessness on a single day in 2015

UNSHELTERED

80 people were on the streets or in places not meant for human habitation

SHELTERED

307 people were in shelter or transitional housing

ZERO:2016 DATA SUMMARY: VULNERABILITY & CHRONICITY

Of the total 334 surveyed, **224 people** experiencing homelessness right now are vulnerable

■ **20%** reported being **violently attacked** since becoming homeless

■ **25%** reported being **homeless for more than 2 years**



St. Francis of Assisi
PARISH

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“In Christ there is mercy and the promise of new Life.”

SCHEDULE

All Fridays of Lent - March 27th

5:00pm - 7:30pm Fish Dinner;
7:00pm The Stations of the Cross

Holy Thursday, April 2, 2015

7:00pm Mass of the Lord's Supper;

Good Friday, April 3, 2015

12:00 noon Living Stations;
1:30pm Veneration of the Cross
6:30pm Evening Prayer;

Holy Saturday, April 4, 2015

12:00 noon Blessing of Food;
8:45pm Easter Vigil;

Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015

Masses at 6:30am, 8am, 9:45am,
11:30am, 1:30pm;

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Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 769-2550
www.stfrancisa2.com

Of blueprints and warnings: dystopian novels (*Part Two of Three*)

Karen L. Totten
Groundcover Contributor

"Truth is very large, and very multiple."
– Margaret Atwood

When we speculate about what the future might look like, we, in part, predicate our guesses on what we already know and experience. Frightening societies out of control, lingering war, disease, or another catastrophe: these are facts of everyday life in the year 2014, along with environmental destruction, government spying, and religious fanaticism.

These are also the subjects of dystopian fiction, also dubbed speculative fiction.

Such works are useful for drawing attention to the real problems of our world – ethical issues, scientific discovery, religious practices, political differences, or technological advances and their effects on everyday life.

At the end of this article you will find a list of some of the more important dystopian novels published in the 20th and 21st centuries. But before we get to that discussion, let's focus on a book which might be allegory, might be prediction.

Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, details a future society in which a caste system divides men and women into groups where some have privileges while others do not. People are divided by rich and poor. They are also divided into roles based on sexual values of the controlling group.

The United States has morphed into the Republic of Gilead with its executions of state prisoners, faked and historically revised news, rationed foodstuffs, circumscribed travel, spying "Eyes," and a regime coming into power following a staged terrorist attack which killed the President and most members of Congress.

This is a dystopian vision of the merging of church and state.

Atwood writes the book not to criticize people of genuine faith or religion's very real value for many people, especially those who are in crisis or afflicted, but to tell a cautionary tale about religious conformity and dangerous zealotry, about blind ambition clothed in the garments of religiosity.

Atwood said herself, "It is not about the evils of religion." In fact, the novel makes reference to many people who use faith as a guide to help them cope with the totalitarian regime they find themselves in.

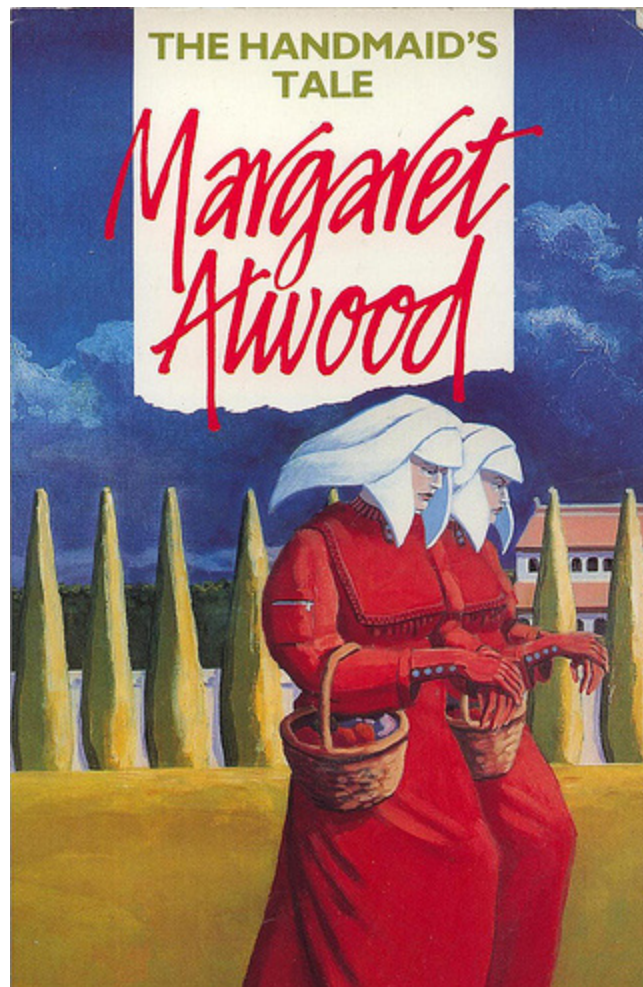
We meet Offred – "Of-Fred" – who as a handmaid is always dressed in a long, red habit and forced to participate in monthly "ceremonies" wherein she must attempt to produce progeny for a well-to-do and powerful Commander and his wife, or risk exile to the deadly polluted colonies where the "unwomen" live.

These ceremonies are marked by readings from the Bible (only the commander is allowed to read), but it is not Atwood's intent to make the Bible a bad thing in and of itself, but rather to show how it has become a tool of control. Life has become the book of Genesis, literally interpreted.

Offred is in her third and final two-year assignment. Her task is simply to procreate and hope that the Commander's wife doesn't hate her so much that she strikes out in anger to destroy a resulting child (as some wives have been wont to do).

There was a time she remembers when she had her own name, a job, her own money to spend as she liked, the freedom to travel and friends. She had a husband, a child, both now gone, who knows where, perhaps dead. In her private moments she remembers and clings to little rituals which help her sustain her sanity, including reciting a version of the Lord's Prayer.

As in other real, theocratic states, women are denied many rights, including choice of lifestyle. In Gilead, reading is forbidden for women. Only the older women who learned "in the time before" know how, though one must not be caught doing it. The markets and trade shops are identified by pictures, not signs, and currency in the



form of tokens bears the image of goods sought.

For the sake of modesty – so called, but really for the security of the state – women have relinquished true intimacy. Women are dressed in habits which reveal their function to society – red for handmaids, green for "Marthas" who do housework and cooking, striped for the poor women who must fend for their

families without help. Most wives of the elite and many men are sterile, and so the handmaids function as sex slaves to preserve "family unity." If the handmaids fail to conceive after six years, they are left to die.

Escape is not possible. The "Eyes" are ubiquitous; to be caught where one ought not to be would mean execution or worse.

This is not a political or social system that Jesus would advocate. No truly faithful person who believes in human dignity would want to live in such a world.

Atwood has described her novel as a work of speculation about how one could go about taking over the United States if one so desired. One would start with a system that many people embrace – religious doctrine, for example – and use it to craft a power shift.

As such, she notes that our nation's revolutionary roots and the roots of Puritan influence remain in our political consciousness. Puritans came to escape religious interference, but also to establish a monotheistic theocracy. Those influences become steps for building on people's dissatisfaction with some elements of today's world.

And so Atwood's book is not an indictment of religion, so much as a warning about the need to examine carefully the

see NOVELS, page 11

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7	1			5				
5	3							1
2		9		6				7
			8			6	5	3
8								9
3	5	4			6			
4				7		3		6
9							1	2
				1			9	5

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Cryptoquote

T FUSLK EL QUD T FUOK SQWKL
ED AUQDTEQL VUUH TQH VEMK
VUM DFK OEQH TL IKWW TL DFK
CUHR.
— CKQYTOEQ VMTQGWEQ

Clue: X = 9

ACROSS

- Sunbathe
- Women's residence
- Architectural feature
- Actor Eric
- Ancient Roman garb
- Combat
- Lucre
- Weight measure
- African beast
- New Zealand parrot
- Paid person
- Fitting
- Disgusting
- Musician Billy
- Customs
- Roles for Tim Roth and Roddy McDowall
- European river
- Hot box
- Front of a sheet
- Fictional thoroughfare
- Flare up
- German surname
- Imperfect
- Bug repellent (abbr.)
- Bergen and Burroughs
- Facial feature
- Sandwich
- Swallowed
- ____-American
- Conger
- Heavenly body
- Steal
- Forge worker
- Word preceding stop or prize
- George Jetson's boy
- Land measure
- Actor Serkis
- Like a swamp
- Close

DOWN

- Indian land measure
- Quite wet
- Rested
- Retain
- Alternative to RGB
- ____ glance
- Fort McHenry sight

Colorful expressions

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17				18							19			
20							21					22		
23				24	25	26			27	28	29			
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34	35	36			37					38				39
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43						44					45			
	46					47				48				
		49			50		51				52	53	54	
55	56				57	58				59	60			
61			62		63			64	65					
66					67						68			
69					70						71			

- Actress Sommer
- African people
- Contribute
- Subject of a verse by Gelett Burgess
- Blacken
- Denizen of Sesame Street
- Heavenly body
- "____ to no one"
- Obligated
- Villainous
- Puccini's works
- Assistant
- Penurious
- Celebrity
- Macula's location
- Village in Iran
- One-percenter

- Suffix with mel- or par-
- ____ von Bismarck
- Ivan or Nicholas
- Mythical creatures
- Magnetic flux measure
- Liturgical shoulder garb
- Aquarium fish
- Volatile liquid
- Famous acting family
- Deranged one
- Model Macpherson
- Muscat's country
- Endeavor
- Food fish
- Viper (Finnish)

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

Puzzle Solutions: Page 11

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1, or the face value of the paper. I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell

to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:
contact@groundcovernews.com
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Bethlehem United Church of Christ

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734-665-6149

Bethlehem Church is the home of the **Groundcover** office

Sunday Worship Times

8:30 am and 10:00 am
Sunday school at 10:15 am
Fellowship Hour follows each service

Upcoming Community Events

- March 10 (Tue.)** Bethlehem Bridges Concert Series, 8pm
Esteli Gomez, Soprano & Colin Davin, Lute
- March 14 (Sat.)** German Pretzel Sales, 10:30am-12 noon
\$1 each or \$10 dozen
- March 15 (Sun.)** Bethlehem Bridges Concert Series, 4pm
Camerata, Mozart's 2nd Violin Concerto
- March 28 (Sat.)** Bethlehem Bridges Concert Series, 7:30
Audi Vitem, Bach's St. John Passion
- Feb. 27 (Friday)** German Pretzel Sales, 11am-2pm,
\$1 or \$10 doz.



We know... and we are them

continued from page 3

to me by others' opinions, and what – in ignorance – I have decided about without even knowing. I can be compassionate, loving and kind in a real and decisive way.

I do not have to be something to understand something.

When we choose compassion, then the divisions recede – though we remain separate and distinct individuals of this human race – and the hatred that drives our conversations is replaced by love and kind words of expression that lay our ideas, hopes, dreams and theology on the table. Then our world can heal, slowly but surely, as we face the difficulties of this life from humanity's perspective, rather than our individual human one.

It only takes one person to start this healing. It takes you.

To step outside your door this day with eyes open; to see the world as it is and

as it could be, in its diversity and its uniqueness. To stop and engage that person selling the Groundcover newspaper you have bought on occasion just to feel better about your day; to sit down with your friend who has just announced that they are homosexual and in a relationship so that you can wrestle with that concept; even to reach out to that poor family that is struggling and give up your lattes for a year so that you may give them a glimmer of the life you enjoy.

Others will follow, and then the day will come when you no longer need to lead them because they have opened their eyes, as well. They will see the circumstances, trials and tribulations of others and pick up the mantle of relationship to walk with them to a brighter future, a better day, and a stronger connection between us all.

Then we will realize that it isn't "them" versus "us."

We will meet ourselves in the eyes of another.



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—MICAH 6:8

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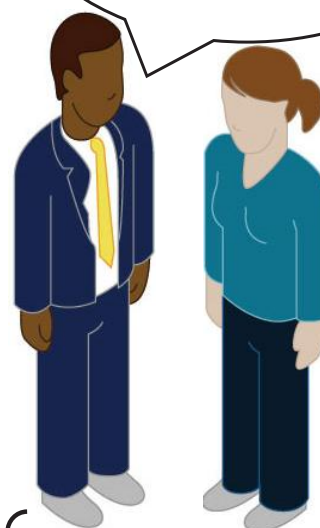
734-714-9814



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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All residents who cannot pay their rent or move-in costs should call Housing Access for Washtenaw County (HAWC) at
734-961-1999



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

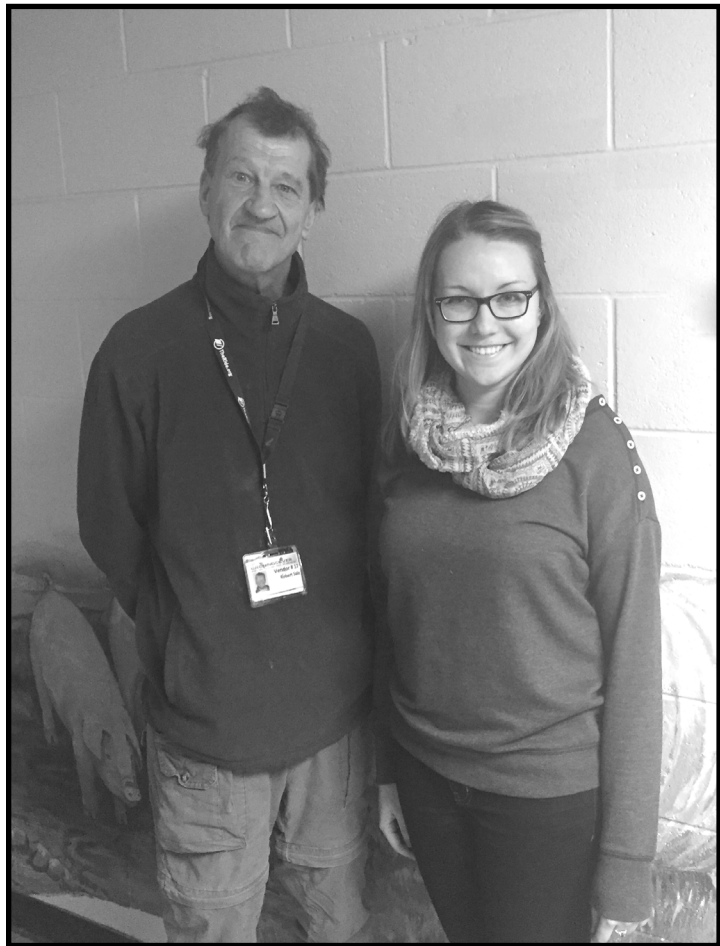
If you are unable to pay for costs, such as rent or utilities, that threaten to leave you homeless, jobless, cold, or in pain, please contact:

The United Way of Washtenaw County call center at **2-1-1**

or go to

ewashtenaw.org
and type "Barrier Busters" into the search bar for a list of participating Barrier Buster agencies

A Diamond in the Rough



Vendor Robert Salo and U-M Student contributor Kaitlin Schuler collaborated on the poem below, conceived of by Salo upon the passing of vendor Shawn Story.

Dedicated to Shawn Story
by Robert Salo and Kaitlin Schuler

Diamonds in the rough are everywhere.
I am one, and Shawn was one.
Diamonds surround us here and there,
even diamonds of those who are gone.

Growing up in Michigan
for me was fun, but not always easy.
Everything that happened made me this man,
though being one of seven kids might make you queasy.

Both Shawn and I had struggles,
like most diamonds do.
Life threw us curves that we learned how to juggle.
Hardship like that makes you want something good and new.

Though here right now Shawn cannot be,
I sit here and finish writing this.
Shawn, I know you'd be proud of me.
And I promise you, you'll always be missed.



Next Generation Philanthropists

by Ian Mark
U-M Student Contributor

One of the best things about Ann Arbor is the sense of community – that the people of the city care about making it a better place. Boasting almost 1,000 nonprofits, the people of Ann Arbor are certainly more involved in community service and social change than the average city. Amongst these organizations is Next Generation Philanthropists, a relatively new organization to the area.

Next Generation Philanthropists (NGP) was founded near the end of 2007 by Michael Nisson. Born and raised in Ann Arbor, he has lived here for nearly all of his life. As a result, he's always felt strong ties to the community and had the desire to give back. NGP is a group of like-minded individuals who each contribute donations to a fund, then research local nonprofits and decide how to allocate the money.

In the seven years since the beginnings of NGP, the organization has awarded \$101,500 in grants to benefit local nonprofit organizations and programs. The group awards grants to programs and organizations of all sorts, from homeless shelters to youth programs.

Members are asked to each contribute \$500 annually. They usually meet every few months – though it varies depending on members' availability – to discuss options for donating and look into organizations within the area. This provides a unique opportunity for members to grow closer to their community, learn about what problems exist, and learn about the organizations

working to address those needs.

"It's not just about the money; it's being able to get engaged," said Nisson.

Members also get to participate in a unique social network of individuals who care about their community. They will often sign up to volunteer at certain events together or spend time together outside of NGP meetings.

"People join for different reasons, but they tend to find multiple ways to gain positive experiences," Nisson said.

Without any advertising or promotion, the group has grown from 12 members to a peak of 35 simply by word of mouth. While numbers have slightly decreased since then, they still maintain a sizable group.

"It's an embodiment of the personalities and mindsets of the 25-to-40-ish crowd that I know. NGP puts together all those traits and personalities," said Nisson.

As members come and go, Nisson sees the group as "more of a living, breathing kind of thing" than one that strictly adheres to any organizational structure. Ensuring that everyone's voice is heard and that the group accommodates the interests of every member is important to Nisson.

For anyone interested in joining Next Generation Philanthropists, visit the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation at 301 North Main Street, Suite 300. They may also be reached by phone at (734) 663-0401.

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1/4	\$159.95	\$215.95	5 X 6.5
1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95	5 X 14 or 10 X 6.5
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95	10 X 14

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Full Year/Twelve Issues: 35% off
Additional 20% off ads with coupons

Of blueprints and warnings: dystopian novels (*Part Two of Three*)

continued from page 7

standards we expect others to adopt, and what that truly means for democracy. In merging church and state, those in authority in Gilead have decided for all what constitutes freedom. And it is neither moral nor Godly. In the Republic of Gilead, the state has decided for all people who they will be and how they will serve.

In the 24 years since the novel was published, the move toward such a theocratic state has grown stronger in some arenas. Let us not make the mistake Atwood so presciently warns about. Liberty and freedom of or from religion: those should be our choices.

A List of Dystopian Works to Read

The Iron Heel, 1908. By Jack London. This book, considered the first dystopian novel in the United States, details the rise of an oligarchic tyranny.

R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots), 1920. A play by Karel Capek. Hostile "robots" more like humans than machines rebel against their makers, thus leading to the annihilation of human beings. Introduced the word "robot" to the English language and science fiction, in general.

We, 1924. By Yeugeniy Zamyatin. Set in the future urban nation of the One State, the society is constructed almost entirely of glass, allowing the secret police to spy on the public with ease. People are identified solely by assigned numbers and their existence is justified by their contribution to economic productivity.

Brave New World, 1932. By Aldous Huxley. Set in London in 2540, or 632 A.F. (After Ford – yes, that's Henry Ford). A place of psychological manipulation where the world is united in one state. Resources are plentiful and people are comfortable, but children are

created in hatcheries and babies sorted into one of five castes, where they remain for life. Constant consumption is the bedrock of economic security.

Animal Farm, 1945. By George Orwell. An allegorical commentary on the Marxist state. Famous quote from the book: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

1984, 1949. By George Orwell. Yes, many believe this is the GOP handbook. The protagonist, Winston Smith, lives in the former Great Britain in a political empire that values constant war and persecutes individual action or thought. Big Brother is watching.

Fahrenheit 451, 1953. By Ray Bradbury. Books are outlawed and any remaining collections found are burned by the "firemen." Follows the events of the life of one fireman, Guy Montag, who decides he no longer wants to participate in the burnings.

The Handmaid's Tale, 1985. By Margaret Atwood. Speculates about

what could go wrong when church and state are not separate.

The Giver, 1993. By Lois Lowry. Newbery Medal winner for children's literature; part of a loose quartet with three other books. Often on middle-school reading lists but also frequently challenged. Follows the story of Jonas through his 12th and 13th years as one designated to become a keeper of memories for his society.

The Road, 2006. By Cormac McCarthy. Pulitzer Prize winner. Bleak tale about post-apocalyptic life. Survivors of an unspecified disaster have become cannibals, for the most part. A man and his son attempt to walk to the sea, where they think life might be better. Also made into a critically-acclaimed movie.

Drugs & homelessness: the connection

by Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz
Groundcover Vendor #159

Another homeless death occurred last month.

The news reported that a 39-year-old man may have died of a drug overdose while trying to live in his tent behind the Amtrak Station.

A day later, a common metanarrative played itself out on my Facebook page when a woman sympathizing with a couple expressed guilt and remorse after she was forced to put them back out into the sub-zero-degree weather upon discovering that, among other things, they were using her diabetic needles to support a drug habit.

One wonders: is it the ravaging effects of drugs that still cause problems in the 21st century, or a slow, bureaucratic, under-developed system charged with handling the problem? After all, it is not uncommon for people with drug ad-

dictions to be filtered out of the systems designed to help them. This oxymoronic approach seems self-defeating, since numbers show that drug addictions account for over 40 percent of the homeless population, according to the Washington Post.

This and other problems show up as some of the fundamental flaws that have allowed homelessness to remain a festering blister on society. From drugs to a person's economic challenges, it becomes obvious that the current system's approaches are outdated – even defunct. It is time for a complete overhaul in the fight against homelessness. The very term conjures up images that strike negative emotions in most people. From drug addictions to economic problems and everything in between, the current agencies and policies are grossly inept, and certainly no match for the complexities associated with this behemoth we call homelessness.

Cryptoquote Solution

A house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body.
– Benjamin Franklin

7	1	6	3	5	9	8	2	4
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Creamy kale & pea soup

by Robin Asbell

NCG, strongertogether.coop

Courtesy of Peoples Food Co-op

Creamy soups are a perfect comfort food, especially when their rich texture conceals a healthy puree of peas and greens. Sweet peas give the soup such a luxurious sensation that you might even think there is cream in this one.

Ingredients

- 1/2 pound kale, stems chopped
- 1 tablespoon butter or canola oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 medium Yukon Gold potato, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 cups frozen peas, thawed
- 2 cups 2% milk or non-dairy milk (or more to taste)
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper

Directions

1. Wash and stem the kale, and chop the stems into small pieces. Reserve. Melt the butter or heat the oil in a large pot, then add the kale stems, onion and potato slices. Sauté over medium heat for about 10 minutes, until the stems and potato slices are soft when pierced with a knife, and the onions are translucent. Add the garlic and the kale leaves, and stir. Cover the pot and reduce the heat to low, and let the kale steam for about 5 minutes. Uncover and stir.

2. Put the peas and the kale mixture into a blender and puree until very smooth, adding milk as needed for a smooth texture. Add the parsley and blend again until smooth. Return the puree to the soup pot, heat through over medium heat, and season with salt and pepper.

Total Time: 35 minutes

Serves 4.

Nutritional Information (per serving): 294 calories, 8 g. fat, 20 mg. cholesterol, 479 mg. sodium, 47 g. carbohydrate, 8 g. fiber, 12 g. protein



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